How a More Diverse Audience is Changing the Gaming Industry

Community NerdyBirdy Apr 15, 2022

There are few activities growing faster in popularity than gaming. Globally, it's estimated that as many as 2.7 billion people played video games in 2020. For billions across the world, gaming is a fun, engaging, and affordable hobby that keeps them connected with friends and family. The recent astronomical growth in gaming has not only altered the makeup of the gaming audience, it's also helped foster changes across the gaming industry.

A Dynamic Global Audience

One of the most visible changes in gaming is the growing diversity in both gaming audiences as well as their surrounding communities. It's no secret that gaming has historically skewed towards men, and at times, towards a specific class of men. Those days are long gone. Women now make up a major part of the gaming audience, as well as different racial, ethnic, and sexual orientations.

The changing demographics and dynamics of the gaming audience and community has also spread throughout gaming studios and publishers. While the early days of gaming were dominated by just a handful of hegemonic game studios, smaller and independent studios continue to emerge throughout the industry, bringing with them an increased focus on experimentation and creativity.

The result of all this has been not only far greater choices in the types of games created, but also a dazzling array of different viewpoints and storylines represented.

New Faces, New Perspectives

As the makeup of gaming developers, designers, and writers has changed, it's brought a long record of innovative approaches to the gaming medium. Many recent games not only have showcased the talent at smaller, more experimental studios, they've also pushed the boundaries of what's possible to achieve through the gaming medium.

Games such as *Life is Strange* and *Lake* introduced a new generation of visual storytelling that centered on female protagonists and the interplay of emotions and conflict that can underlie our personal relationships and narratives. And games such as *Psychonauts* and *The Red Strings Club* used gaming's mechanics and storytelling to weave together ideas on emotional states. Finally, games such as *Genderwrecked* have used gaming to explore the journey and experience of transgender characters.

The Growing Diversity of the Xbox Ambassadors

As Xbox Ambassadors, we see gaming's increased diversity as a strength and an opportunity to produce meaningful communities, connections, and games. The Xbox Ambassadors program is built on the idea that when everyone can play, we all win. That ethos underlies everything we do in the program. From promoting inclusivity, kindness, and acceptance among the gaming community, to encouraging new thoughts and viewpoints, we believe that greater diversity can only lead to a stronger gaming experience.

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